

Washington, DC — Today Congressman Earl Blumenauer (D-Ore.) announced legislation on Iraq, calling for the withdrawal of US forces, accountability for how federal funds are being spent, and enhanced diplomatic efforts. The legislation, titled the “New Direction for Iraq Act of 2007,” requires the redeployment of U.S. troops from Iraq, a new diplomatic offensive to stabilize Iraq, aggressive efforts at oversight and accountability, and a new approach towards reconstructing Iraq.

“For too long Congress has been a willing enabler of the President’s war,” said Blumenauer. “Now is not the time for the President to repeat his mistakes or those of Johnson and Nixon before him. This legislation demands accountability and sets a new direction for Iraq.”

Congressman Blumenauer has actively opposed the war in Iraq from the beginning. He fought against the resolution authorizing the President to lead the country to war, and campaigned against the Bush policies in 20 states over the last two years. Congressman Blumenauer also advocated a plan for withdrawal over a year ago when he introduced legislation to begin bringing the National Guard home.

The “New Direction for Iraq Act of 2007” offers a comprehensive approach to a new policy for Iraq and can be summarized as follows:

- Sets out the goals of U.S. policy as supporting the Iraqi people, preventing greater violence, re-establishing U.S. international credibility and military readiness, and refocusing on real national security threats.

- Prohibits permanent U.S. military bases in Iraq, as well as U.S. control over Iraq’s oil infrastructure and economic policies.

- Prohibits the escalation of the Iraq War, without specific Congressional approval.

- Requires the responsible redeployment of U.S. forces from Iraq to be completed within

approximately one year.

- Redirects U.S. reconstruction funding from large contractors to Iraqi owned businesses to help create jobs in Iraq.

- Instructs the President to nullify contracts with any company that has not fulfilled an Iraq reconstruction contract and to recover lost funds.

- Encourages Congress to investigate and the Attorney General to aggressively prosecute war profiteering and fraud.

- Directs the President to begin a regional diplomatic effort, including direct negotiations with Syria and Iran, to promote stability in Iraq and seek to solve other outstanding regional issues, such a nuclear proliferation and support for terrorism.

- Supports a new effort at an Israeli-Palestinian peace agreement.

- Directs the President to seek a new United Nations resolution to support international cooperation in stabilizing Iraq.

- Requires the President and the Iraqi government to agree on performance benchmarks and conditions further support for the Iraqi government on the achievement of those benchmarks.

- Requires the appointment of a Special Envoy for Iraq Reconciliation.

- Authorizes additional funds for strengthening Iraqi civil society, including labor unions, environmental groups, and community organizations.

- Authorizes assistance to support a neutral international effort to disarm, demobilize, and reintegrate members of sectarian militias.

- Requires the development of country strategies to address the needs of Iraqi refugees.